

U. S. Highway 12
Fort Atkinson Area
Needs Assessment Study
Summary

Study Summary

1. Purpose of US 12 Needs Assessment Study

The purpose of this study was to assist WisDOT in identifying needs and public sentiment toward possible improvements to U.S. Highway 12 (US 12). Discussions held early in the study process with local officials raised questions regarding the need for any potential improvement or modification to the US 12 corridor in the Fort Atkinson area.

2. Purpose of Any Additional US 12 Study

The purpose of any further study or modification to the US Highway 12 corridor would be to address the needs identified in this document and to ensure this portion of US 12 remains a safe and effective regional corridor serving the traveling public while supporting the existing and future transportation needs of the city of Fort Atkinson and the town of Koshkonong.

3. US 12 Needs Assessment Findings

Based on public input, future land use analysis and projected traffic volumes, the following transportation needs have been identified within the corridor. Any future study should address solutions to these needs, and any proposed US 12 corridor alternatives should be measured against these needs to gauge their effectiveness in meeting the regional transportation system's existing and/or anticipated deficiencies.

- Existing roadways and intersections will have trouble handling the increased traffic resulting from continued development, causing significant congestion. High levels of congestion are anticipated on Madison Avenue from Lexington Boulevard to Robert Street, and on Robert Street from Riverside to South Third Street.
- Existing roadway and intersection geometrics contribute to higher frequency of crash occurrences at a number of intersections. Left unchanged, increasing corridor traffic will cause safety problems to intensify, particularly at the Main Street intersections, and the Robert Street and Madison Avenue, and South Main and Rockwell intersections
- Pavement condition, especially in rural areas, contributes to safety problems, especially in poor weather conditions.
- Truck traffic, recreational traffic, and non-local traffic have a significant noticeable impact on the downtown area. Regional traffic traveling through the city will increasingly impact local system mobility, economic vitality and perceived quality of life factors (i.e. noise, safety, speeding).
- Land access/mobility conflicts occur frequently within the corridor as the highway is called upon to meet its dual role of providing regional mobility and local land access.

4. Project Study Area

The study area includes the US 12 corridor and region surrounding Fort Atkinson from the northwest side of the city of Whitewater to the US 12 interchange with State Trunk Highway (STH) 26 on the northwest side of Fort Atkinson.

5. Existing Roadway/Traffic Conditions

US 12 is classified as a Corridor 2020 Connector Highway in the state's roadway functional classification scheme. As a part of the National Highway System, it extends from Detroit, Michigan to Aberdeen, Washington, and passes through eleven states.

US 12, as it travels through Fort Atkinson, needs to efficiently satisfy the needs of two distinct user groups. Specifically, US 12 is expected to carry regionally oriented traffic (i.e. motorists with no purpose other than to pass through Fort Atkinson) while at the same time act as a local street for city residents and others. Through motorists are subjected to a host of local traffic conditions and vice versa.

The Existing Roadway Conditions section of *[the full Needs Assessment Report]*, beginning on page 7, provides documentation on:

- Current traffic volumes
- Intersection functionality
- Roadway usage
- Crash and safety data
- Travel time, speed and delay
- Physical condition of roadway
- Access and parking

6. O-D Study

In May 2001, WisDOT conducted a traffic origin and destination survey for (Rock) County N and US 12 south of the city of Fort Atkinson. Key data was collected on the number of trips on the highways and categorized them as regional or "through" trips versus local, or those trips that began or ended in the Fort Atkinson area.

For the US 12 station location, the survey found:

- 7,300 total vehicles traveled on the highway during the survey day in May, 2001. Sixty-eight (68) percent of those trips originated in Fort Atkinson while 32 percent were classified as regional or through trips.
- 650 trucks traveled on the highway during the survey day. Thirty-five (35) percent of those trips originated in Fort Atkinson while 65 percent were classified as through or regional trips.

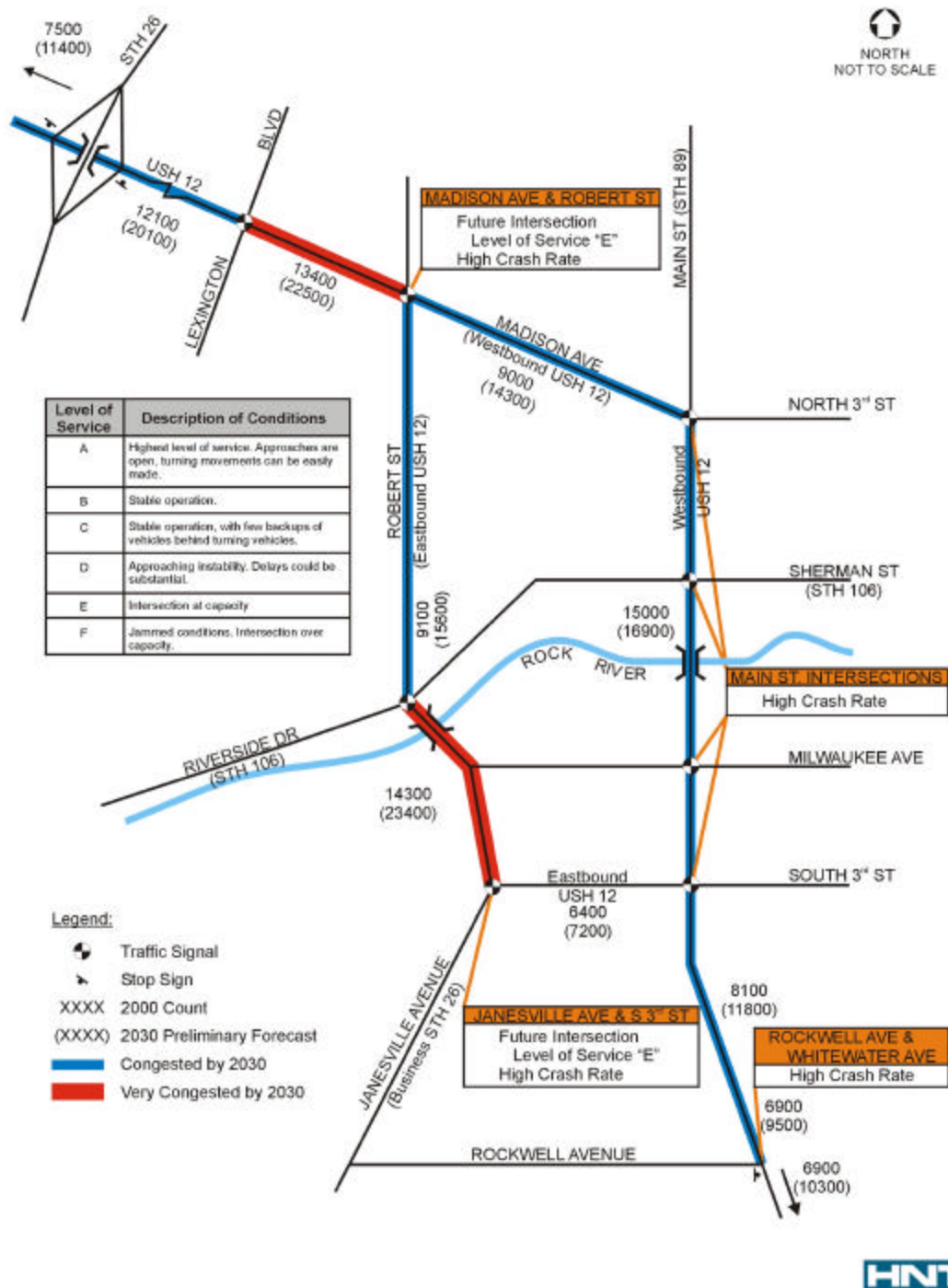
7. Future Traffic Conditions

In October 2001, an analysis of US 12 traffic needs based on travel volumes projected for the year 2030 was completed. The analysis was based on the following assumptions:

- Locally adopted transportation and land use plans are implemented
 - Existing roads, intersections, and signal timing plans remain unchanged
 - Travel patterns and needs remain relatively consistent
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Exhibit 1 illustrates the major findings of the Future Traffic Conditions analysis.

Exhibit 1: Future Traffic Conditions



8. Future Land Use and Socio Economic Factors

As part of the US 12 Needs Assessment, a Geographic Information System (GIS) was used to study the various socio-geographic features of the US 12 corridor in the Fort Atkinson area. Maps of the area were associated with databases to better illustrate trends in population growth, land use and development, and transportation systems. Data was gathered for the cities of Fort Atkinson and Whitewater, four adjacent townships in Jefferson County, one adjacent township in Walworth County, and two northeastern townships in Rock County. The GIS mapping included a base map, parcels, land use, planned land use, natural resource features, and demographic and economic development data.

Existing land use has been compared to planned land use from locally adopted land use plans and will be used to forecast future growth and potential traffic generation that may occur from these planned changes in land use. Major employer locations within the region were also mapped, showing the number of employees at various locations to visualize where some of the traffic generators are located.

Exhibit 14 and 15 on pages 36 and 37 of *[the full Needs Assessment Report]* show the existing and planned land use within the study area.

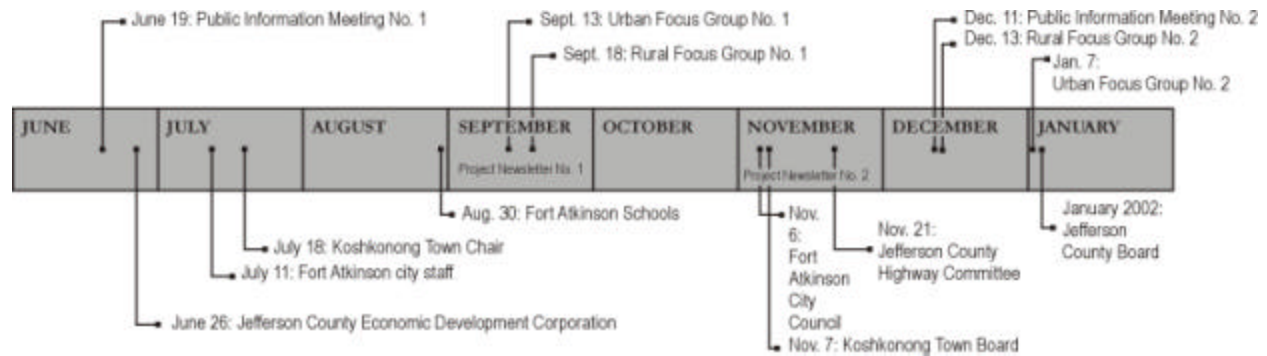
9. Public Involvement

Public involvement played a significant role in the study process and documentation of findings. Public input was collected in a variety of methods:

- Two Public Informational Meetings
- Four Urban- and Rural-Area Focus Groups Meetings
- Two Project Newsletters
- Other Stakeholder Outreach
 - Toll-Free Number / e-mail
 - Four Press Releases
 - Media Interviews
 - Small-Group Meetings and Presentations
 - City Council
 - Town Board
 - County Highway Committee
 - School District
 - County Economic Development Corporation
 - Jefferson County Board

Exhibit 2 illustrates the Study's timeline of the various public involvement activities.

Exhibit 2: Time Line of the Study's Public Involvement Process



In addition, a public survey was conducted by St. Norbert College to gather statistically valid information from Fort Atkinson and Koshkonong residents selected at random regarding transportation needs along the US 12 corridor. The survey methodology featured:

- A random sample of both listed and unlisted numbers
- A final sample size of 401 completed surveys
- A confidence level of 95 percent that the sample would not vary by more than +/- 4.9% from what would have been obtained by interviewing everyone in the community
- Up to five phone call attempts reach to each household in sample

The answers to survey questions were, for the most part, very similar for persons living in Fort Atkinson as compared to persons living in Koshkonong. For example, the responses to questions concerning safety and congestion are shown below. The percentages indicate persons answering affirmatively to the questions:

Table 1: Select US 12 Community Survey Responses by Area

Question	Percent agreeing:	
	Fort Atkinson	Koshkonong
Are there safety issues along US 12?	83%	81%
Is there traffic congestion along US 12 in or around Fort Atkinson?	73%	64%
Have you avoided going to downtown Fort Atkinson because of congestion along US 12?	31%	31%

Source: St. Norbert College, 2001